60 YEARS OF INTERCULTURAL LEARNING AND SHARING CULTURES

YAYASAN AFS ANTARABUDAYA MALAYSIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2018:
60 YEARS OF INTERCULTURAL LEARNING AND SHARING CULTURES
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WHAT WE BELIEVE IN

By linking our “learning to live together” philosophy to the defining global issues facing humanity, AFS fosters intercultural understanding as a powerful and productive tool for building a more just and peaceful world. The AFS global community embraces differences and believes our world is stronger and more interesting because of them.

AFS MISSION

To engage Malaysians to embrace our differences and celebrate our commonalities through committed volunteerism for a united Malaysia.
FOREWORD

2018: Our Diamond Jubilee, a sparkling 60 years of sharing cultures

Looking back, AFS has come a long way in our peace movement to bring global understanding as an intercultural exchange organisation; breaking barriers of ethnicity, culture, religion, politics, and language through intercultural learning and educational discipline. We have sent over 4000 Malaysians abroad and hosted over 3000 foreign participants in Malaysia, touching the lives of over 2,600 host families and made an impact in over 680 schools.

The journey has not been easy: we faced many challenges over the years, and at the beginning of 2018, we faced a drastic decline in our program numbers. Relying on our flagship Year Program is no longer feasible and we had to explore other avenues to continue our mission.

With 60 Years of intercultural experience, we felt that it was time to bring our expertise home and help Malaysia’s nation building efforts.

In November, we embarked on a Domestic Exchange initiative to build stronger and sustainable bridges between the different cultures, religions, practices, aspirations and value systems of Malaysians.

Starting with Deepavali, we organised a festival homestay program for young Malaysians to experience celebrating the joyous occasion with Hindu families, thus learning the culture and customs of the Indian community from within. It was an eye-opening experience for both the participants and host families who valued the amazing intercultural exposure and we have a lot of interest in other festivities that we will continue to offer moving forward.

And as we celebrate our 60 years, we look forward to reshaping the AFS focus to become more than just an intercultural exchange that we currently provide - we want AFS to stamp its role as the leading and most prestigious intercultural learning programme in Malaysia. We want to be recognised as a leader in intercultural learning and to actively contribute to the country through sharing our expertise and experience in this area.
All our achievements were made possible because we have excellent volunteers who are tirelessly promoting our mission; dedicated staff who ensure the continued smooth running of the organization and a strong board who provides valuable leadership and direction to the organization.

Our gratitude also goes to the Ministry of Education for the support and endorsement of our programs; The U.S.A Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) for sponsoring the YES Program; Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) for sponsoring the Kakehashi Program and all our sponsors who believe in our mission.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: SENDING

INTENSIVE & VERY SHORT PROGRAM
In the year 2018, Yayasan AFS Antarabudaya Malaysia sent a total of 12 students to 5 countries – Denmark, Spain, China, Italy and Japan. One student received an AAI scholarship to China. We are currently looking to expand our programs to more countries for Intensive and Very Short Program in the near future and hope to increase the recruitment numbers.

SEMESTER, YEAR & COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM
As at year 2018, we have sent a total of 64 participants on the Semester Program, Year Program for both Southern and Northern Hemisphere (SH and NH cycle) and Community Service Program. For the SH cycle, 32 Year Program and 19 Semester Program participants successfully completed their stay. We hope to expand the list of countries for these programs in future.

KENNEDY-LUCAR YOUTH EXCHANGE & STUDY PROGRAM
39 students were selected as finalists for the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange & Study Semester Program to the United States for the year 2018. The program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of State, provides scholarships for secondary school students from countries with significant Muslim populations to spend up to a year in the United States. Participants serve as “youth ambassadors” of Malaysia, promoting mutual understanding by forming lasting relationships with their host families and communities. The YES Alumni played a big role in preparing students at a Pre-Departure Orientation. The students were also invited to a Luncheon hosted by the US Embassy during Pre-Departure Orientation which provided them an opportunity to meet and mingle with American embassy representatives.
ASIA KAKEHASHI PROJECT (JAPAN)

14 students departed for Japan in August on a 6-month intercultural program. This pilot project is a fully funded program granted by MEXT (Japan Ministry of Education & Technology), meant to build bridges between high school students in Japan and Asia. Students from 20 selected Asian countries were given the opportunity to study in Japan for 6-10 months, being hosted by Japanese high schools with homestay or dorm-stay and were exposed to Japanese education, culture and local experiences.

40,000 Japanese high school students and 1,000 Asian high school students will be impacted by the project in developing global competence of Japanese high school students through intercultural experiences without going abroad, and it will provide Asian high school students educational and cultural experiences in Japan.

DOMEX PROGRAM

In conjunction with the 60th Anniversary of AFS Malaysia, we launched a new program called The Domestic Exchange (DOMEX) Program which is a one-week exchange program for Malaysian participants to experience different cultures, religions, practices, aspirations and value systems. DOMEX participants are placed with a host family to experience what it is like to be a Malaysian from a different perspective. During the program, participants will take part in cultural activities and learn more about the religions, culture, practices, aspirations and value systems within the diversity that Malaysia has to offer.

For the inaugural DOMEX, 5 non-Indian participants celebrated Deepavali hosted by Perak Chapter. They attended an orientation before the commencement of the program to prepare them for the intercultural journey and took part in many festival activities that provided them with a better understanding and appreciation of the celebrations.

Another DOMEX was successfully arranged in December, hosted by Perak Chapter as well, for non-Christian Malaysians to experience celebrating Christmas.
Being part of this exchange experience has given me the opportunity to widen my eyes and my mind to have a better view in life. Maturity, good manners and leadership had I finally obtained to strengthen.

Nurin Syahmina bt. Sharif (SMysSH18)
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Nurin Syahmina bt. Sharif (SMysSH18)

As part of the recruitment drive for 2018, chapters and volunteers visited schools to promote AFS programs. The school road shows conducted from the month of January until April successfully attracted 1105 applications.

Overall, student applications have increased in the same recruitment period from last year. However, a few states showed a marked increase, indicating that AFS programs have reached a wider target audience over the last few months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
<th>HOST COUNTRY</th>
<th>TOTAL OF PARTICIPANTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Short Program (VSP)</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Japan (School based)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Program (IP)</td>
<td>6 – 8 weeks</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spain (Summer Camp)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>China (Language Program)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Japan (Language Program)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES Program</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia Kakehashi Project</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>France</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester Program (SM)</td>
<td>5-6 months</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>China</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>France</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Program (YP)</td>
<td>8 – 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: HOSTING

HOSTING PROGRAM

The total hosting number for 2018 was 33 participants with school based at 20 pax and 18+ community service program with 13 pax for both SH and NH cycles. As for the school-based program, Japan, US and Italy are the sending partners and Germany remains as the major sending partner for 18+ community service program.

Hosting highlights included a Festive Exchange program where we placed students with host families of different races so that they may experience Malaysian celebrations throughout the year. For students living with a Chinese family, they will be placed with an Indian or Malay family during Deepavali and Eid Celebrations, and the same with Chinese New Year celebrations. The Festival Exchange has always been the most popular experience for our hosted students.

In addition, we also organized a two-week short-term exchange program, or STE, for our school based participants. During the two weeks, students were able to learn about authentic cultural experiences as they are placed in different states in Malaysia such as Sarawak, Terengganu, Kelantan, Pahang and Kedah. STE is one of the most anticipated cultural enrichment activities for hosted students and is conducted twice a year, in March (NH Batch) and September (SH Batch).
Below is the breakdown of the Hosting Program in Malaysia for the SH18 and NH18 Batch.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program and Duration</th>
<th>Sending Country</th>
<th>No. of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Program (4 – 8 Weeks)</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Program (8 – 11 months)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Based Program</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Program</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18+ Community Service Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators Program</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The year 2018 was a productive year as we carried out many initiatives to cater to the needs of our volunteers and staff. The team initiated a few personal development programs for our stakeholders to ensure sustainable development of the organization as well as their personal growth in the organization.

The team was also involved in the organizing of an Intercultural Forum in conjunction with our 60th Anniversary celebrations with an impressive list of experts as guest speakers. The continuous support from all our stakeholders has ensured a smooth and positive growth of the organization in achieving its aim of becoming a regional hub for training, learning and education.

The training programs carried out in 2018 are:

1) Intercultural Learning Level W (4)
2) Travel & Airport Crew Training
3) Orientation Facilitators Workshop
4) Interviewers Workshop
5) Liaison Person Workshop
6) Post Arrival Orientation Pilot Project
Besides these workshops, the team also expanded the mentor pool for trained facilitators. This initiative has received the thumbs up from our stakeholders as it not only provides a learning platform for facilitators but also a mentoring session which is geared towards the personal development of our volunteers.

The implementation of the AFS Student Learning Journey Curriculum has also been successful in all our orientation programs and we will continue to strive for growth in our efforts to provide training, learning and education for all volunteers and staff.
Here are some of the events that took place in 2018 under Chapter & Volunteer Development:

**TRAINING & OVERSEAS OPPORTUNITIES**

- YES Chaperon 2018 in New York, U.S.A. (Jan)
- YES Alumni & ECA Workshop in Washington DC, U.S.A. (Mar)
- AAI Outstanding Volunteers Training in Bangkok, Thailand (April)
- YES 15th Anniversary End of Stay Orientation in Washington DC, U.S.A. (June)
- Global Village 2018 in Pennsylvania, U.S.A. (June)
- China-ASEAN Education Co-operation Week in Guizhou, China (July)
- YES Alumni Training of Trainers in Cairo, Egypt (September)
- AFS Global Conference in Budapest, Hungary (September)
- YES Consortium Meeting in Washington DC, U.S.A. (October)
- Round Table Initiative Conference in Beijing, China (October)
EVENTS

- AAI Outstanding Volunteers Training
  In conjunction with the annual AAI Meeting, held in Bangkok. Opportunity was offered to all 3 winners of the Volunteer Inspirasi 2017. However, only 1 could make the time to attend.

- Leadership Retreat
  A biennial event, the retreat saw AFS NO staff, Board and chapter leaders get-together for teambuilding activities and brainstorming sessions amid refreshed bonding held at A’ Famosa Resort in Melaka.

- Chapter Presidents Meeting
  Both meetings were held during with the 2 hosting cycles’ End of Stay Farewell Dinner i.e. May and November.

- AFS Malaysia 60th Anniversary celebrations – of events & activities
  Chapters who managed to run events and activities were Johor (Cultural Walkabout), Kedah (Kehidupan Kampong homestay), Klang (International Traditional Costume Parade & Contest) and NS Chapter Japanese festival event culminating to AFS Photo Exhibition themed “60 years of Intercultural Learning” in November.
CHAPTER & ALUMNI UPDATES

A new committee is in place for Pahang Chapter headed by Datuk Martini Osman. The Succession Plan was smooth and well-executed.

AFS MAS Returnee committee was dissolved in October. It was decided that members could perform better if roles were based on specific tasks.

Among the activities where Alumni were involved in were #PressforProgress International Women’s Day, Leadership Encounter Series – Returnees’ Success Story, Buka Puasa with AFS Club @ Sunway members, Alumni Talks, Gift of Sight 3.0, Gift of Sight 3.5 “Kita Bagi, Kita Buka”, #AFSsafeSpace returnee gathering and YES Alumni Committee Election in December.

A major highlight was a workshop organized by MAS YES Alumni led by committee member Celine Lean, who is visually impaired, called the ISLAND Conference. ISLAND is an acronym for Inclusive Society: Looking at Abilities and Not Disabilities. A total of 20 alumni from across the SEA region participated, including one who was wheelchair bound. The Guest of Honour for the closing dinner was Mrs. Jane Thompson, the wife of the US Embassy’s Charge d’Affairs, Mr. Dean Thompson.

INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

Some international visitors paid courtesy calls on the National Office, among them notably were AFS India National Director and AFS USA staff.
60 YEARS OF INTERCULTURAL LEARNING
Back alleys, nooks and corners, cafes and side streets featured heavily in AFS Malaysia’s 60th anniversary Cultural Race edition where participants had to solve riddles, take photographs, shoot videos and make a cultural discovery of the paths less trodden in KL City.

The race attracted 60 participants comprising returnees, students, host families and AFS Partners from Ghana and Denmark. Digital technology was employed in which race questions were executed entirely on Instagram. Participants had to find and follow the adventures of a lost ‘hosted student’, Victoria Lowell, who had been separated from her host family while on a trip to KL and had wandered around the city on her own.

Participants were taken on a maze of back alleys and side streets in their attempt to track the ‘hosted student’ and interacted with locals along the way. ICL elements were featured in the race questions which teams then had to include in their hastily-produced videos uploaded on Instagram.

The main prize sponsor for the Cultural Race was Google Malaysia, which sponsored four Google Home Minis. McDonald’s sponsored breakfast, meal coupons and refreshments. AFS Volunteers also generously chipped in for the prizes, namely Chairperson, Khalilah Talha, National Director, Atty Sulaiman and Penang Chapter President, Datin Teo Hwee Ai.
Key milestones of the AFS journey in Malaysia were on display at the 60th Anniversary Exhibition which was first held at Sunway University in conjunction with an AFS Intercultural Forum and later at Grand Dorsett Subang during its gala dinner.

From the battlefields of World War One and Two where AFS first began to more recent times, the exhibition told the story of AFS in dramatic pictures. Original footages of the American Field Service ambulance drivers in action during the two World Wars elicited a lot of interest among exhibition visitors who were largely Sunway University students, lecturers and members of the public.

AFS International President Daniel Obst briefed on AFS’ history to the guest-of-honour, HRH Tunku Ali Redhauddin ibni Tuanku Muhriz, Crown Prince of Negeri Sembilan who officiated the launch of the exhibition.

Exhibition coordinator Annie Yap and her team poured over hundreds of photos before shortlisting and selecting the final 40. “We had to keep in mind the chronology of events, from our early history to the present day. The pictures can be rotated and exhibited for future AFS road shows too,” she said.
As part of its effort to promote mutual understanding and encourage intercultural exchanges in the community, AFS Malaysia organized a one-day forum to discuss the future of intercultural learning in the country and its contribution to the nation building agenda in conjunction with its 60th anniversary celebration.

Yang Amat Mulia Tunku Besar Seri Menanti, Tunku Ali Redhauddin ibni Tuanku Muhriz, the Chairperson and Board of Trustees for Teach for Malaysia, graced the closing ceremony.

In his keynote closing address, Tunku Ali reminded the younger generation to take time and connect with people, especially family and friends. He urged them to always keep an open mind, understand and appreciate other cultures and their significance. “It is not enough to just know about a landmark, a custom or tradition, but to go deeper and find the meaning and reasons behind them and why they are important,” he added.

The topic of discussion at the forum centred around local and global landscapes of intercultural learning including AFS’ own role in providing such experiences to its participants. Issues such as the participation of the international community in promoting diversity, inclusivity and unity, from a global context, was also discussed.

Speakers at the forum included the AFS Intercultural Programs President Daniel Obst, AFS MAS Advisor, Datin Yasmin Merican as well as several prominent and well-known AFS Malaysia returnees.
The Minister of Education Malaysia acknowledged AFS’ positive role in providing life-changing intercultural adventures that allow participants to appreciate, value and deepen their insights about other perspectives, cultures, religions and important world issues.

In a speech read out by Dr Habibah Abdul Rahim at AFS Malaysia’s 60th anniversary gala dinner, the minister affirmed that the AFS Programme is an important element in efforts to internationalise the education sector in the country and was in line with the Malaysian Education Development Plan to enable every student to leave school as a global citizen, with core and universal values and a strong Malaysian identity.

AFS Intercultural Program President, Daniel Obst in an earlier speech congratulated AFS Malaysia on its 60 years of achievement and growth. “AFS Malaysia has accomplished much in terms of building bridges among communities and creating a global relationship to allow more Malaysians to be more connected to the world and also to bring more people around the world to experience Malaysia,” he added.

The night also celebrated the support of Friends of AFS Malaysia. Appreciation awards were presented to the Japan Embassy, US Embassy and Malaysian Palm Oil Council for their continuous support and contribution to AFS Malaysia for the past six decades.

Some 400 people comprising embassy guests, government officials, returnees, AFS Partners and students, volunteers and host families attended the event which featured a traditional songket theme.
“There is a real urgency to provide opportunities to all young people to engage with the unfamiliar, appreciate and respect differences, and use the knowledge gained from understanding cultural differences to find and act on solutions for the problems in the world.”

— DR. VISHAKHA DESAI, AFS BOARD CHAIR, SPEAKING AT THE WISE INNOVATION SUMMIT (QATAR, 2017)
LEADERSHIP
AFS MALAYSIA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2018

KHALILAH DATO’ MOHD TALHA
Chairperson

ELENA SHAMSUDDIN
Program Development

DATUK YASMIN YUSUF
Fundraising and Events

NIZAM MOKHTAR
Legal Affairs and Finance

ELLANGESH MUTHUSAMY
People and Processes Development

SHUKREEN MA
Public Relations and Marketing

SHOBA DEVI
Government and School Relations

NATIONAL OFFICE

ATTY SULAIMAN
National Director

ANNIE YAP
Assistant National Director/ Chapter & Volunteer Development Manager

JASMIN MELAN
18+ and Fundraising Manager

KUHAN KANDIAH CHELVANATHAN
Training, Learning & Education Manager

NANI TAHA
Program Manager

KAUTSAR ISMAIL
HR & Finance Manager

LIYANA JOHAN
Chapter & Development Executive

NURHASLIZA SAHADI
Digital Marketing & Creative Design Executive

NADIA SAMSUDDIN
Programs Executive - YES Program

SITI SOPHIE ISMAIL
Programs Executive (Sending Programs)

ZAINAL IZUDDIN SAHARUDIN
Program Executive Hosting - School Based

FARAH ZULKIFLI
Programs Executive (Hosting Programs)

MOHD FAREEZ JAFAAR SIDIK
Human Resource Administrator
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

EMBASSIES

Embassy of Denmark
Embassy of Dominican Republic
Embassy of France
Embassy of Italy
Embassy of Japan
Embassy of Spain
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
Embassy of the Republic of Korea
Embassy of the United States

MINISTRIES/ GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE)
  * School Management Division
  * Special School Education Division
  * Curriculum Development Centre
  * Cluster/Fully Residential School Management Division
  * Co-curricular Unit
  * State Education Department (JPN)
    i) School Division
    ii) Curriculum Unit
    iii) Relations and Registration Unit
    iv) Academic Unit

Ministry of Tourism Malaysia
Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia (MOFA)
Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture Malaysia
Immigration Department of Malaysia
Inland Revenue Board of Malaysia (LHDN)

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Children’s Protection Society
Eden Handicap Service Center
Outward Bound Malaysia, Perak
Penang Cheshire Home
Perak Society for the Promotion of Mental Health Pertubuhan Rumah Amal Cahaya
Tengku Ampuan Rahimah (RACTAR)
Rapha Children’s Home, Pahang
Rita Home
St. Nicholas’ Home, Penang
Tadika Penang Buddhist Association
The Dementia Society Perak
“Broadening the perspectives of our next generation of leaders and empowering them to communicate, negotiate and collaborate across differences is mission critical if we want to combat the rising tide of intolerance we see everywhere.”

— DANIEL OBST, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF AFS INTERCULTURAL PROGRAMS
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